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Stark Introduces Alameda Housing Authority Director Mike Pucci Before House Committee

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WASHINGTON, DC — Today, Congressman Pete Stark (D-Fremont) welcomed Mike Pucci, the Executive Director of the City of Alameda Housing Authority, to Washington, introducing him at a hearing before the House Financial Services Committee. Stark appealed to Committee members and the Congress to help Alameda meet the dire housing needs of many families by increasing funding for the Section 8 housing voucher program.

"HUD's effort to cut Section 8 housing vouchers is short-sighted and harmful," Stark said. "Low income families need a helping hand, not a cold shoulder. I'm pleased to welcome Mike Pucci to Washington and to work with him on the housing issues affecting our community."

Mr. Pucci testified to the Financial Services Committee on the impact that cuts in Federal Section 8 housing assistance are having on Alameda's low-income families and the ability of the city to meet current and future affordable housing needs.

"The low-income members of our community depend on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program to stay in this community — near friends and family members who provide critical support," Pucci said. "In addition to over 1,600 families that we serve through the Section 8 Program, we have a list of 6,000 additional families waiting for assistance. HUD's failure to pay on an 'actual cost' basis and its failure to fund our reserves resulted in the [Alameda] Housing Authority no longer having enough money to pay for 1,625 authorized vouchers. This situation has put 108 families at risk of becoming homeless on August 1."

Congressman

Stark, who serves on the Ways and Means Committee appeared as a guest on the Financial Services panel. Since early March, Stark has sent three letters to HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson seeking financial help for Alameda's Housing Authority.

"Along with Mr.

Pucci and the City of Alameda, I have been working hard to find help for these families and prevent them from losing their homes," Congressman Stark said. "I've called on HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson to use HUD funds to address Alameda's housing crisis. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration has been unresponsive. I continue to urge the Financial Services Committee to reverse these arbitrary changes in Section 8 law and protect housing for poor families."

Mr.

Pucci punctuated his testimony before the Financial Services Committee by recounting the story of a young, single father from Alameda who is in danger of losing his housing assistance.

"Another

young man, named Anthony, a single parent of a teenage son, told me that this past year was the first time he and his son were able to live together," Pucci recounted. "The Section 8 Voucher Program allowed him to get a decent place to live so he was able to get custody of his son. This was the best year of both of their lives."

"If he

loses his Section 8 Voucher he will lose his housing," Pucci continued. "If he loses his housing he will lose custody of his son."

After the hearing, Stark expressed his commitment to continue his lobbying efforts on behalf of Alameda.

"Mike

Pucci's testimony did a lot to help put a human face on this problem," Stark said. "Short of a final solution to this mess, I will continue to work with Committee members and my House colleagues to free up more funding for Alameda's housing needs."